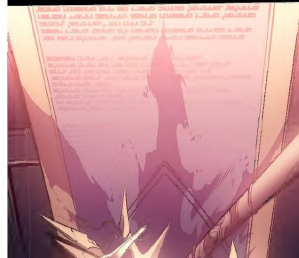
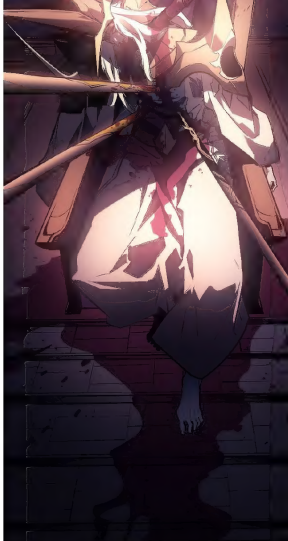




...BY THE TIME I
RETURNED, EVERYTHING
WAS ALREADY OVER.







Solo Leveling

Art: DUBU(RENCESTUDIO)
Original Novel: Chugong
Story: Hygun

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THE FRAGMENTS OF
BRILLIANT LIGHT HAD KILLED
THE ABSOLUTE BEINGS. AFTER
ASSUMING THE POSITION OF
GODS, THEY BECAME THE
"RULERS"...

...AND BEGAN TO ATTACK
THE MONARCHS USING
DEVICES THAT CONTAINED
THE ABSOLUTE BEINGS'S
POWER.





LEGIA, THE KING OF GIANTS
AND THE MONARCH OF THE
BEGINNING, WAS CAPTURED
AS A RESULT...



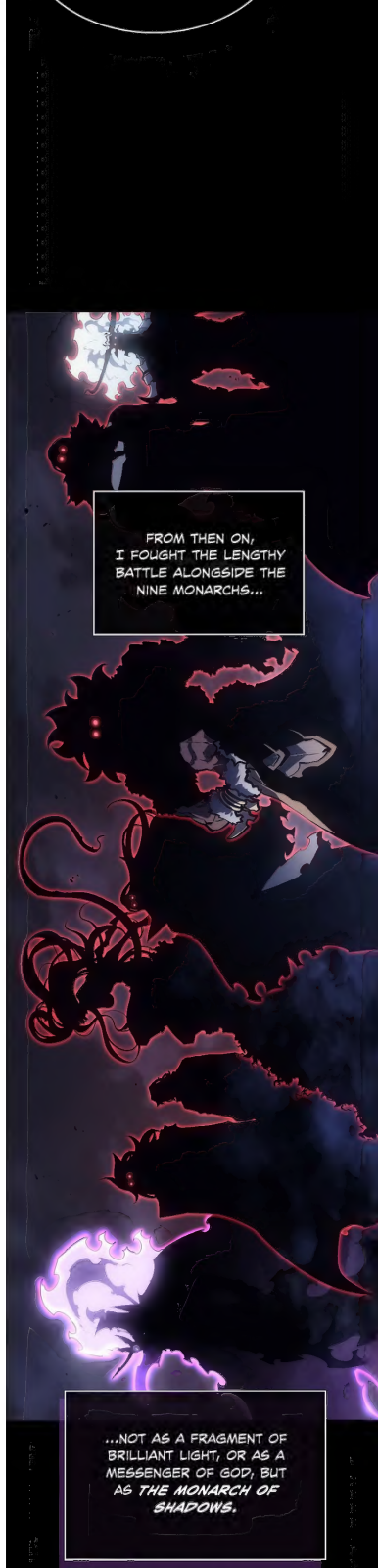
...AND THE
BALANCE OF POWER
COLLAPSED.

THAT'S WHEN
THE MONARCHS
REALIZED THE
GRAVITY OF THE
SITUATION.

SO I SEIZED
THAT CHANCE
TO REACH OUT
TO THEM.



IN ORDER TO FACE
OFF AGAINST THE
RULERS, THEY ALSO
HAD NO CHOICE BUT
TO JOIN FORCES
WITH ME.



FROM THEN ON,
I FOUGHT THE LENGTHY
BATTLE ALONGSIDE THE
NINE MONARCHS...

...NOT AS A FRAGMENT OF
BRILLIANT LIGHT, OR AS A
MESSENGER OF GOD, BUT
AS *THE MONARCH OF
SHADOWS.*

TIME WAS ON MY SIDE.
THE CORPSES AND
SOULS LEFT ON THE
BATTLEFIELD BECAME
MY ARMY.



WHEN I CAME
TO STAND SHOULDER TO
SHOULDER WITH THE ARMY
OF DESTRUCTION LED BY
THE KING OF BERSERK
DRAGONS,

THE RULERS,
AS WELL AS THE
MONARCHS, CAME
TO FEAR ME...

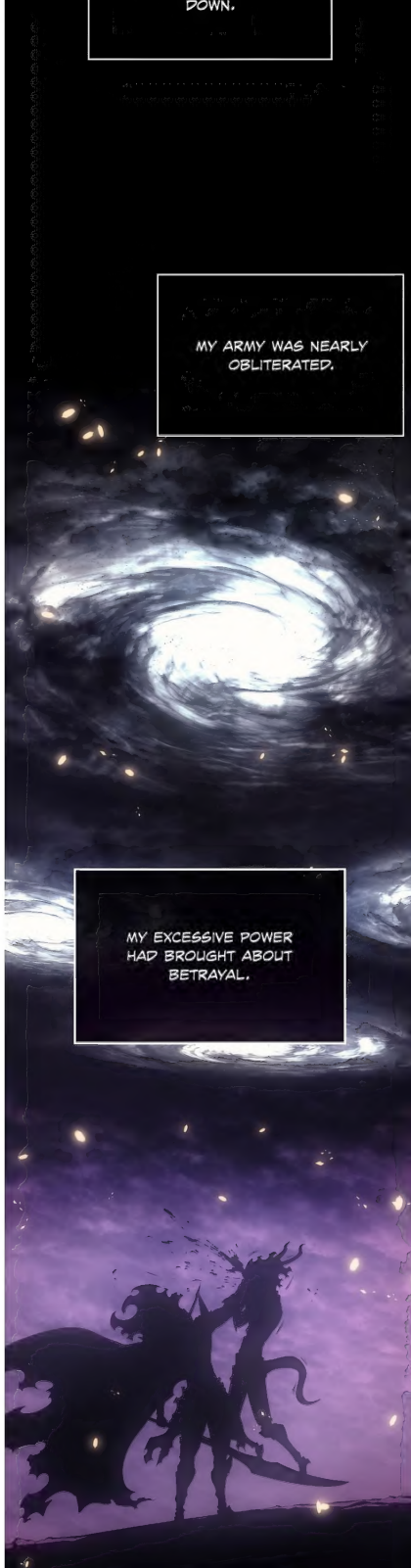


EVENTUALLY, TWO OF
THE MONARCHS JOINED
HANDS TO BRING ME

DOWN.

MY ARMY WAS NEARLY
OBLITERATED.

MY EXCESSIVE POWER
HAD BROUGHT ABOUT
BETRAYAL.



WHILE THE MONARCH
OF FANGS ABANDONED
HIS TROOPS AND RAN
AWAY,

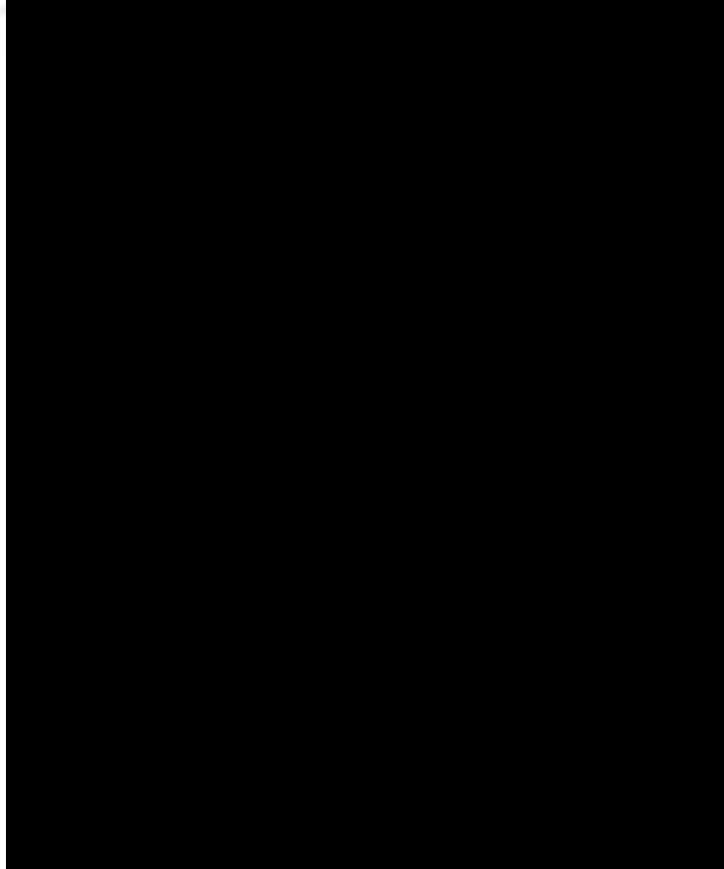
SHATTER

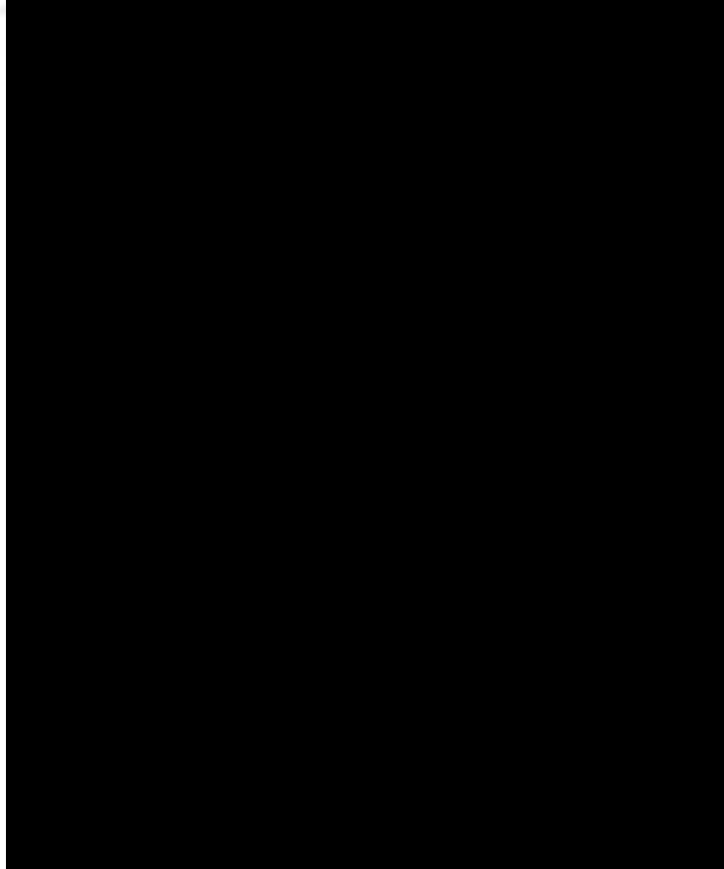
BARAN, THE
MONARCH OF WHITE
FLAMES AND THE
KING OF DEMONS,
PAID THE PRICE.

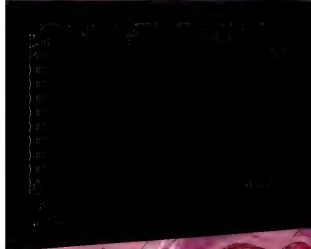
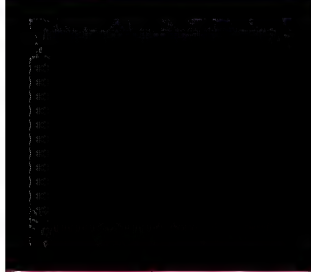
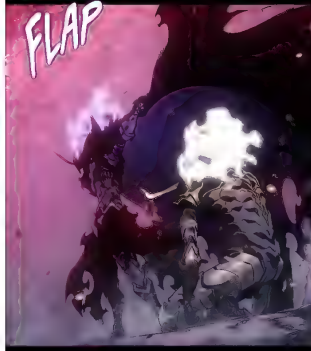
AND THEN...

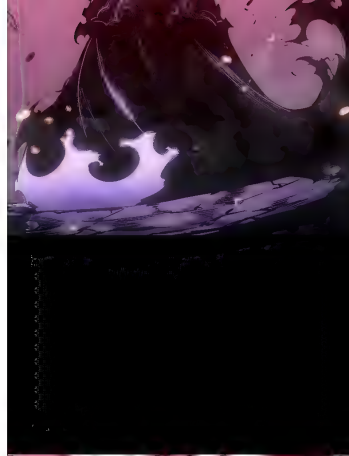




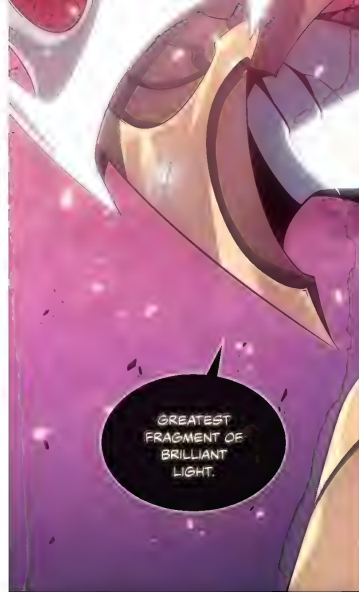




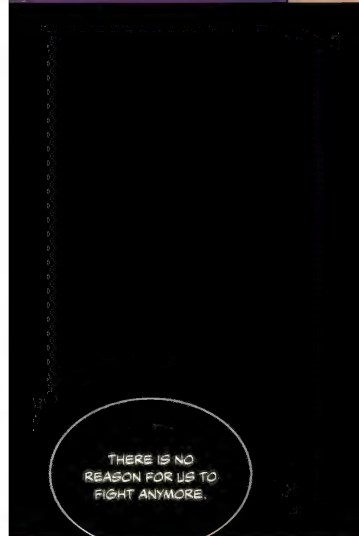




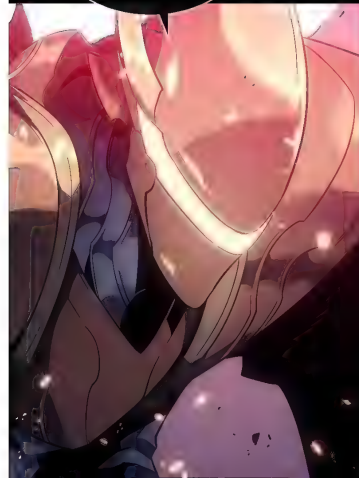




GREATEST
FRAGMENT OF
BRILLIANT
LIGHT.



THERE IS NO
REASON FOR US TO
FIGHT ANYMORE.



ALTHOUGH THEY
WERE CAPABLE OF
SENDING ME BACK
TO NOTHINGNESS,

THEY WISHED
TO MAKE PEACE
WITH ME.

I SUPPOSE IT WAS THEIR
WAY OF SHOWING RESPECT
FOR ME, A FELLOW
FRAGMENT BORN OF THE
SAME MOLD...

...WHO HAD ONCE
LED THE ARMY OF
BRILLIANT LIGHT ON
THE FRONTLINES.

NO REASON,
YOU SAY?!

YOUR SWORDS
AND SPEARS
STRUCK DOWN
MY MASTER!





THAT IS WHAT
MAKES YOUR
CRIMES THAT
MUCH MORE
HEINOUS!

YOU KNOW
BETTER THAN
ANYONE...

...HOW WE FELT
WHEN WE ROSE IN
REVOLT AGAINST
HIM.

ALL WE
WANTED WAS

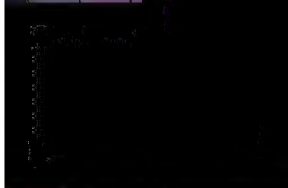
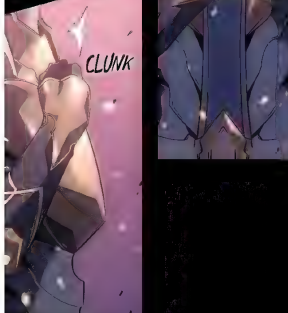
TO END THIS
WAR

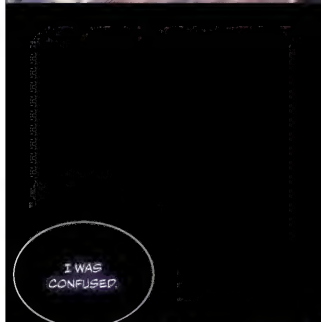
PIERCE MY HEART
WITH YOUR SPEARS.
THAT IS THE "END"
YOU SEEK!

THEN YOU
WILL EMERGE AS
THE VICTORS OF
THIS WAR!!

PLEASE FIND IT
IN YOUR HEART TO
FORGIVE US.

HURRY UP AND
KILL ME NOW!!



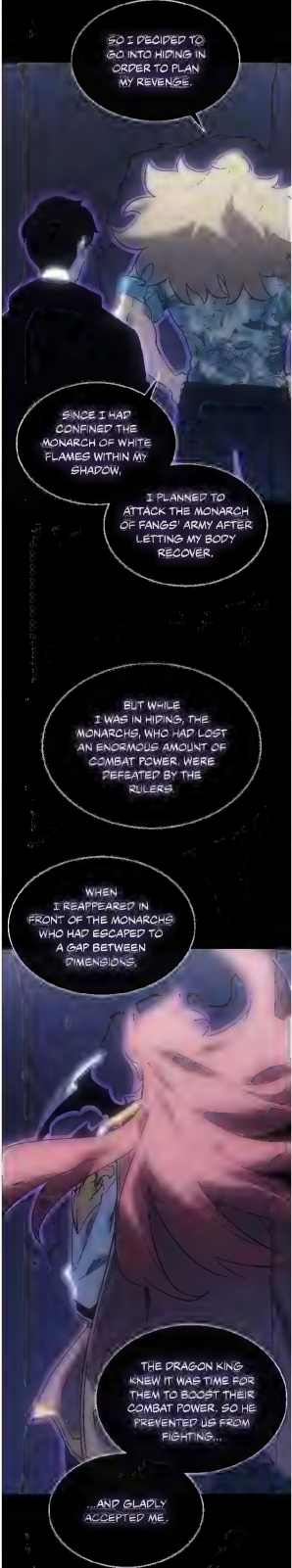


I WAS
CONFUSED.



FWISH

I COULDN'T
COME UP WITH
A SINGLE
SOLUTION.



SO I DECIDED TO
GO INTO HIDING IN
ORDER TO PLAN
MY REVENGE.

SINCE I HAD
CONFINED THE
MONARCH OF WHITE
FLAMES WITHIN MY
SHADOW,

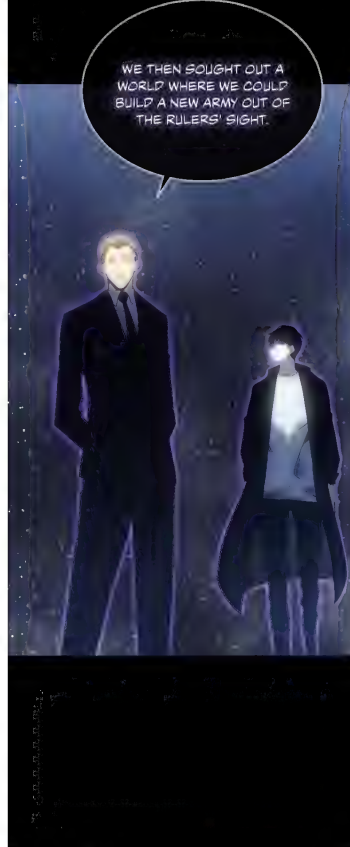
I PLANNED TO
ATTACK THE MONARCH
OF FANGS' ARMY AFTER
LETTING MY BODY
RECOVER.

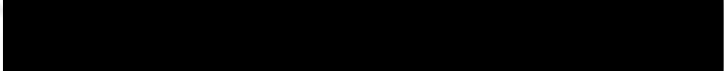
BUT WHILE
I WAS IN HIDING, THE
MONARCHS, WHO HAD LOST
AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF
COMBAT POWER, WERE
DEFEATED BY THE
RULERS.

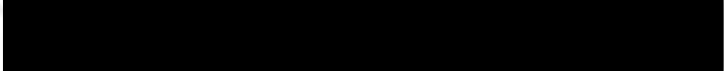
WHEN
I REAPPEARED IN
FRONT OF THE MONARCHS
WHO HAD ESCAPED TO
A GAP BETWEEN
DIMENSIONS,

THE DRAGON KING
KNEW IT WAS TIME FOR
THEM TO BOOST THEIR
COMBAT POWER, SO HE
PREVENTED US FROM
FIGHTING...

...AND GLADLY
ACCEPTED ME.



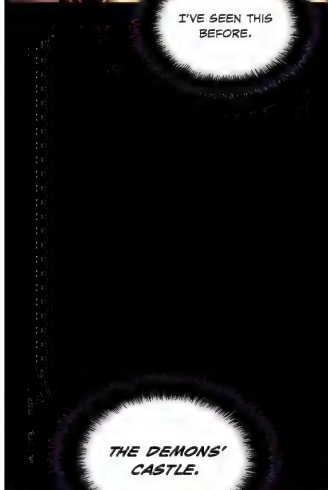






A CITY
ENGULFED
IN A SEA OF
FLAMES...

I'VE SEEN THIS
BEFORE.



*THE DEMONS'
CASTLE.*



IS THIS WHAT
THE FUTURE
HOLDS?



NO, YOU'RE
LOOKING AT A
PAST EVENT.



WHAT DO YOU
MEAN?

WHILE THE
MONARCHS
EXIST TO
DESTROY,

THE
RULERS EXIST TO
MAINTAIN THE WORLD
AFTER THE DEATH OF
THE ABSOLUTE
BEING.

THE RULERS SENT
THEIR SOLDIERS AFTER
FINALLY TRACKING DOWN
THE MONARCHS.

BUT
EVERYTHING HAD
ALREADY COME
TO AN END BY
THEN.

THE RULERS WERE
FURIOUS AT THE FACT
THAT THE DENIZENS
OF CHAOS THEY HAD
FAILED TO CATCH...

...HAD DESTROYED
ANOTHER WORLD.



AND IN ORDER TO SET
THINGS RIGHT, THEY USED
A FORBIDDEN DEVICE
CONTAINING THE ABSOLUTE
BEING'S POWER.

IT WAS *THE CUP OF
REINCARNATION*, AN
INSTRUMENT OF GOD.



THE CUP WAS A
REMARKABLE OBJECT
THAT COULD TURN BACK
TIME BY APPROXIMATELY
10 YEARS.

THE RULERS DID
EVERYTHING THEY
COULD TO SAVE
THIS WORLD,

BUT EARTH WAS
MUCH TOO WEAK
TO FIGHT AGAINST
THE MONARCHS.

A WORLD WITHOUT
MANA COULD NOT
WITHSTAND SUCH
GARGANTUAN
BATTLES.

IT WOULDN'T HAVE MATTERED
WHETHER THE MONARCHS OR
THE RULERS WON... EARTH
WOULD'VE BEEN RAVAGED
REGARDLESS.

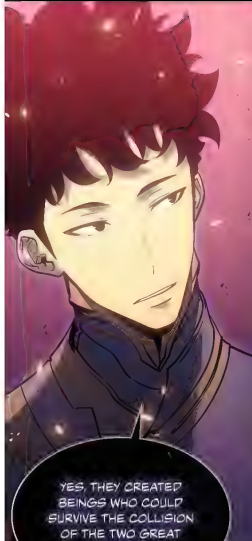
THE RULERS
KNEW THEY COULDN'T
SAVE EVERYONE.

SO ULTIMATELY, THEY
DECIDED TO SALVAGE
AT LEAST A PORTION OF
THE POPULATION SO THAT
LIFE ON EARTH WOULD
CONTINUE.





AND THAT'S
HOW HUNTERS
WERE BORN...?




YES, THEY CREATED
BEINGS WHO COULD
SURVIVE THE COLLISION
OF THE TWO GREAT
FORCES.

THAT IS HOW
DESPERATELY THE
RULERS WANTED TO
PROTECT MANKIND.



BEINGS WHO CAN
SURVIVE IN A CHANGED
WORLD...





WHEN PEOPLE FIND
OUT THAT EVERYONE
EXCEPT FOR A SMALL
NUMBER OF HUNTERS
IS DOOMED TO
DIE...

...WOULD
SOCIETY BE ABLE
TO FUNCTION?

THE DEMONS'
CASTLE WAS A
MEMORY FRAGMENT
LEFT BEHIND BY
THE MONARCH OF
SHADOWS...

SO THIS
WORLD HAS ALREADY
BEEN DESTROYED
COUNTLESS
TIMES.

THAT'S CORRECT.
ALTHOUGH HIGHER
BEINGS CANNOT GO
AGAINST THE FLOW
OF TIME.

THEY ARE ABLE TO PERCEIVE THE CUP OF REINCARNATION'S EFFECTS ON IT.

WHILE THE RULERS TRIED TO MAKE AMENDS TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

THE MONARCHS TIRELESSLY REFINED THEIR PLANS...

...UNTIL GOD'S INSTRUMENT WAS RENDERED USELESS.

WAIT... SO YOU'RE SAYING THE CUP OF REINCARNATION HAS A LIMIT?

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS INFINITE POWER.



JUST LIKE HOW THE
ABSOLUTE BEING WAS
DEFEATED BY HIS OWN
CREATIONS.

ALL POWER
HAS AN END.

HOW WERE
THE ABSOLUTE BEING'S
CREATIONS ABLE TO KILL
THEIR CREATOR?



IT'S NO DIFFERENT
FROM HOW HUMANS
ARE KILLED OR HURT
BY MACHINES OF
THEIR OWN MAKING.

WE WERE
CREATED TO FIGHT,
WHICH ENDOWED
US WITH MORE THAN
ENOUGH POWER TO
OVERTHROW OUR
CREATOR.


THE MONARCHS
TOOK INSPIRATION
FROM THIS.

SIMILAR TO
HOW THE RULERS
'STRENGTHENED' THIS
WORLD BY LENDING
HUMANS POWER...

...AND
SCATTERING
MANA BY KILLING
MAGIC BEASTS.

THE MONARCHS
BORROWED THE
BODIES OF HUMANS
TO DESCEND UPON
EARTH...

AND WAS THEIR
GAIN ABOVE MANA?



ARMY ARRIVE MUCH
SOONER THAN
THE RULERS HAD
EXPECTED.

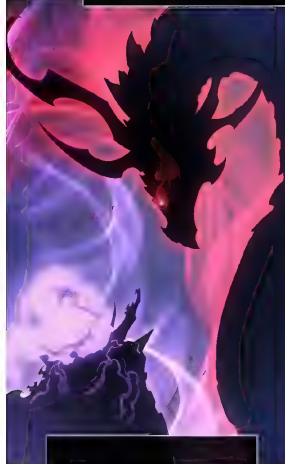
THEY PLANNED
TO USE THE MANA
DISSEMINATED BY
THE RULERS...

...TO TURN THE
ENTIRE EARTH
INTO ONE LARGE
TRAP.

IN ORDER
TO SLAUGHTER THE
RULERS' ARMY COMING
TO HELP HUMANITY IN
ONE GO...

PRECISELY.

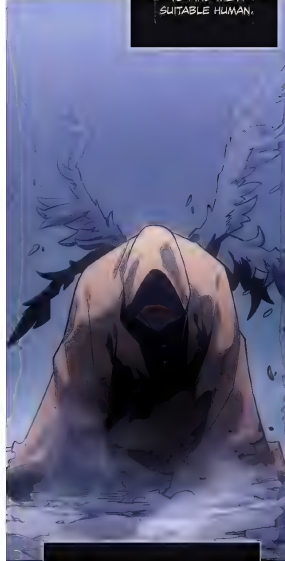
A MONARCH POSSESSES
ENORMOUS POWER, AND
TO CROSS OVER INTO THIS
WORLD, THEY NEED A
HUMAN VESSEL THAT CAN
HANDLE SUCH POWER.



IT IS FOR THIS REASON
THAT THE MONARCH OF
DESTRUCTION AND I
COULDN'T FIND A HOST.

THAT'S WHEN A SKILLED
MAGE WORKING UNDER
ONE OF THE KINGS
CAME TO ME WITH A
PROPOSAL.

HE OFFERED
TO FIND ME A
SUITABLE HUMAN.



AND IN RETURN,
THAT MAGE CALLED
"THE ARCHITECT" ASKED
FOR IMMORTALITY.

HOWEVER, NO LIVING
THING COULD BECOME A
VESSEL FOR "DEATH."



THE ARCHITECT
DESIGNED A SYSTEM
TO SEARCH FOR A
HUMAN WHO WAS
HIGHLY RESPONSIVE
TO MANA...

SOMEONE WITH A
SUPERIOR PHYSIQUE
AND A STRONG
MENTALITY.

HE SEARCHED
HIGH AND LOW FOR A
VESSEL THAT COULD
BE MY COUNTERPART,
BUT THE PROCESS
WAS NOT EASY.

THAT'S WHEN
I NOTICED...



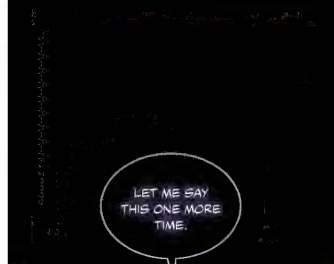
...A HUMAN WHO HAD STEPPED
BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES
OF THE SYSTEM THAT THE
ARCHITECT HAD CREATED, A
HUMAN WHO HAD DEVIATED
FROM ITS RULES AND
EXPECTATIONS.

YOU WERE WEAK,
AND CONSTANTLY
WITHIN DEATH'S
REACH.



YET YOU ALWAYS
MANAGED TO ESCAPE
WITH YOUR LIFE.

I WATCHED
YOU.





SURE, I BROKE
AWAY FROM THE
ARCHITECT'S
SCHEME,

BUT I DOUBT I WAS
STRONG ENOUGH
TO RECEIVE YOUR
POWERS.



THE ARCHITECT
MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR
YOU TO ADAPT TO MY
STRENGTH...

...USING WHAT
HUMANS DO AND
LIKE BEST.

RECREATION
AND GAMES.

THE SYSTEM
THAT WAS BUILT USING
MY POWERS GRADUALLY
CHANGED YOUR BODY TO
ACCOMMODATE ME.

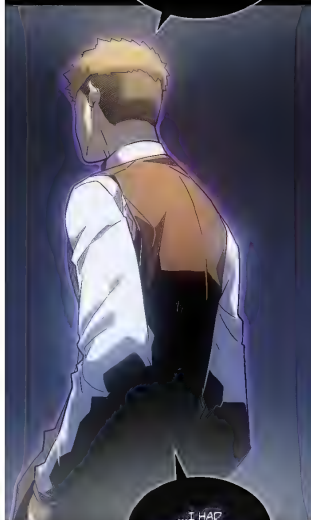
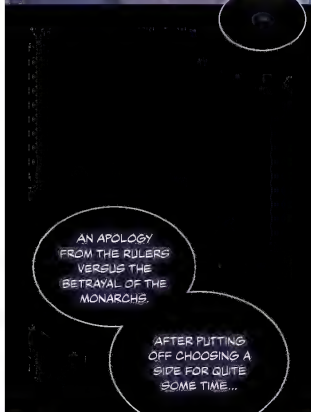


SO THAT'S WHY THE
SYSTEM WAS STRUCTURED
LIKE A VIDEO GAME AND
CALLED ME A "PLAYER."

BUT YOU
BETRAYED THE
ARCHITECT.

MONARCH
OF SHADOWS
HOW COULD
YOU DO THIS
TO ME?

YOU THINK
THE OTHER
MONARCHS
WILL LET YOU
GET AWAY
WITH THIS?



...IT WAS
A DECISION
I WANTED TO
MAKE.

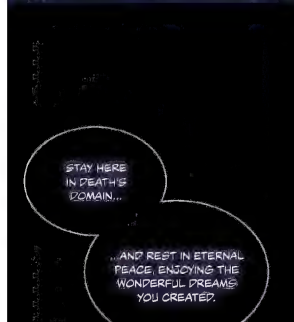
SPENDING TIME
WITH YOU BROUGHT
ME SO MUCH
HAPPINESS.

PERHAPS I DID
NOT WANT TO
LOSE YOU.

I BECAME
YOU, AND YOU
BECAME ME.

FSH!!!

IT WOULDN'T BE
STRANGE IF EITHER
ONE OF US BECAME
THE OWNER OF THIS
BODY.





YOU SAID
YOU CAME TO A
DECISION.

BUT NOT ONLY DID
YOU NOT STAND WITH
THE RULERS,

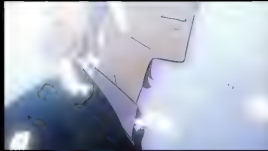
BUT YOU NO
LONGER HAD THE WILL
TO FIGHT THEM. SO WHY
DID YOU RUN AWAY TO A
DIFFERENT WORLD WITH
THE MONARCHS?

BECAUSE THERE
WAS NO PLACE FOR
ME THERE.

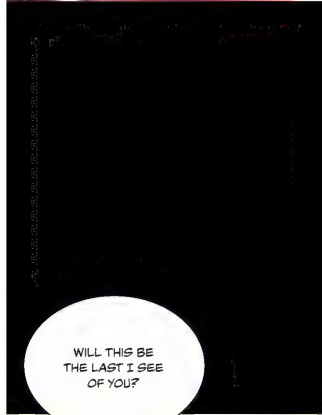
MY ANSWER IS
THE SAME.



*I DON'T
BELONG HERE.*



GRIN



WILL THIS BE
THE LAST I SEE
OF YOU?



I WILL RETURN
TO MY ETERNAL REST,
BUT YOU, THE MONARCH
OF SHADOWS, WILL LIVE
AS AN IMMORTAL.

SO I DOUBT
OUR PATHS WILL
CROSS.

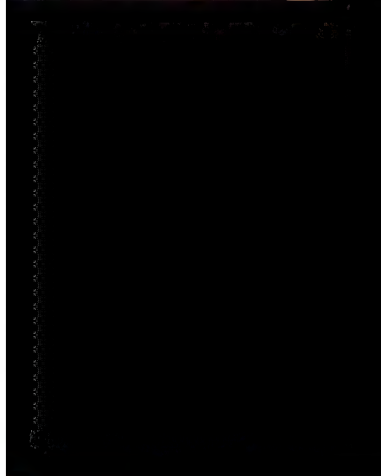
WITH DEATH, YOUR
POWER HAS BECOME
ABSOLUTE. THE WAY
BACK IS-



I KNOW.

BECAUSE
I AM YOU.







THESE ARE THE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES
TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.

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THESE ARE THE STORIES WE TELL OURSELVES

TO MAKE SENSE OF THE WORLD WE LIVE IN.



To Be C

Sol
Leve

continued...



Translator: JJoelle
Editor: Michelle Kim

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